

X-Sender: vgreen@pop.artic.edu  
Mime-Version: 1.0  
Date: Tue, 30 Nov 1999 13:07:23 -0500  
Reply-To: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>  
Sender: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>  
From: Vanalyne Green <vgreen@ARTIC.EDU>  
Subject: Re: course suggestions  
To: FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM  
Status: RO

Valerie Soe wrote:

>Bill Jones in LA put out an amazing video last year called something like  
>The Fall of Communism As Seen Through Gay Porn (not sure of the exact  
>title). It's got a whole section that's taken from actual screen tests of  
>young men for Eastern European porn. I don't know how he came across the  
>footage but it's pretty remarkable.  
>

Yes; I love Bill's tape. John Hanhardt recommended that I look at it when I talked to him about developing the course. I find it amazing that Bill doesn't have a distributor, at least at last word from him.

Thanks, V

--V

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Vanalyne Green  
Associate Professor, Video Department  
The School of the Art Institute of Chicago  
112 South Michigan Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60603

312 345 3540, office  
773 274 6605, home

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For info on FrameWorks, contact Pip Chodorov at <PipChod@aol.com>.X-Sender:  
vgreen@pop.artic.edu  
Mime-Version: 1.0  
Date: Tue, 30 Nov 1999 16:20:30 -0500  
To: Chuck Kleinhans <chuckkle@nwu.edu>  
From: vgreen@artic.edu (Vanalyne Green)  
Subject: Re: do it yourself porn

Status: RO

Hi, Chuck!

You around for the holidays or are you heading west?

Thanks for the all the suggestions. I would love to see "Men Again version 2."

Best, V

>Hi Vanalyne

>

>I made a 6 min. tape, Men Again version 2, which uses shots of men

>appropriated from porn, deliberately many generations down, etc. and a

>found sound track which may or may not be useful--who needs a camera to

>make video, right?

>

>I have a bad dub of a crude but sometimes funny tape, Laugh at the Fags,

>which is intersting. And Curt McDowell's Loads, of course.

>

>Other titles--Of course there is Fuses and some of Barbara Hammer's work,

>but you knew that...

>

>it might bae worthwhile to show some do it yourself porn made by amateurs

>distributed in video stores...a lot of it imitates the dominant harad core

>forms, but some of it is

>Chuck Kleinhans

>Director of Graduate Studies, Radio/Television/Film

>Northwestern University

>1905 Sheridan Rd. Evanston IL 60208-2270 USA

Date: Tue, 30 Nov 1999 16:53:32 EST

Reply-To: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>

Sender: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>

From: ConnerSF@AOL.COM

Subject: Re: course suggestions/screen tests

To: FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM

Status: RO

Vanalyne Green wrote:

<<>I'm also thinking about

>genre--for example the creation of the "screen test" trope in gay

>porno--and sexuality, as in representing sex as an everyday event

>>

I've noticed too that this trope everywhere in gay porn - now more than ever with the emergence of the ultra-gritty, homemade video porn subgenre. Thomas Waugh's work on the early history of gay porn (in his book, *Hard to Imagine*, and "Cockteaser" in *Pop/Out: Queer Warhol*) sheds a lot of light on the spectatorial - and legal - relations which originally informed the long-take, "screen test" form of many early porno loops, e.g. the "danglie" and "the posing strap" subgenres. He also makes clear the strong connections between these exploitation films and the sixties and seventies underground film scene. Although it isn't really pornographic, Ronald Tavel/Warhol's *Screen Test #2*, starring Mario Montez, certainly deserves mentioning. Curt McDowell's wonderful screen test films - *Ronnie and Loads* - are my favorite examples of this sort of genre cross-fertilization (ahem). More contemporary queer filmmakers have also been attuned to persistence of this trope. Michael Wallin's *Black Sheep Boy* includes lots of "screen test" footage, and all of Bruce La Bruce's work (but *Super 8 1/2* most of all) deals very self-consciously with that same history.

As I understand it, the screen test scenario is fairly common in the straight porn genre too, but there does seem to be something rather different going on in the gay version. Where straight "screen tests" simply seem to be concerned with making the body visible, as quickly as possible, the gay versions have to deal with the more difficult problem of how to make queer desire visible. The underlying and very titillating undercurrent in many of these "screen test" situations arises from the indistinctness of the filmed subject's pleasure: is the man being "tested" enjoying it? is he being coerced? (the Bill Jones video mentioned earlier doesn't allow for any other possibility - rather simplistically, to my mind) does he enjoy being coerced? Given that so much gay erotic literature deals with exactly these same tensions - the perils and pleasures of "straight" seduction - it would seem that the "screen test" manages to boil those dynamics down to a very pure, schematic form.

What has also been interesting to me is the way in which the "screen test" form mimes the techniques of the police interrogation, nowhere more obviously than in Warhol's use of voice-off in *Screen Tests #2* and *#3*. In some film notes that were posted to this list a while back, I mentioned that there was something very Warholian about the whole Clinton-Lewinski spectacle: in fact the four-hour Clinton cross-examination tape reproduced every single formal feature that we most commonly associate with Warhol's work. Really, what better term could there be for that interrogation besides "screen test"? The real fascination of the form, I think, lies in its dense knotting of knowledge, power, and the erotic: what gets eroticized in the screen test, in other words, isn't just the body beneath the clothes, but the "truth" behind or within the filmed body. With the gay screen tests, the tacit, even

obliging cooperation of the "straight" subject suddenly turns the volume of the erotic charge way up; even when he resists, the sadistic elements of the test - as it becomes ordeal - undeniably produce a different (if more sinister) surplus of pleasure as well.

I'm sure I've already said too much, so I'd better stop before the cops come after me too.

David Conner  
History of Consciousness  
UC Santa Cruz

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For info on FrameWorks, contact Pip Chodorov at <PipChod@aol.com>.  
Mime-Version: 1.0  
X-Sender: namac@shell12.ba.best.com  
Date: Tue, 30 Nov 1999 14:21:20 -0800  
Reply-To: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>  
Sender: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>  
From: NAMAC <dan@NAMAC.ORG>  
Subject: Re: course suggestions/screen tests  
To: FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM  
Status: RO

>Vanalyne Green wrote:

>

><<>I'm also thinking about

>>genre--for example the creation of the "screen test" trope in gay

>>porno--and sexuality, as in representing sex as an everyday event

There's a huge subgenre of screen-test amateur videos that feature military men. Dirk Yates' Private Collection is extensive and heartily consumed by gay porn consumers. They usually include Dirk Yates' bizarre line of questioning which seems to be intended to prove their authenticity as military guys; and to both underscore their heterosexuality in a genre that is provoking queer desire. Things get blurry. <<http://www.dirkyates.com/>>

Also, among the huge amateur diy porn producers that focus on the fetishization of race is Latinoguys.com <<http://latinoguys.com/>> where you can spend \$20 and get a tape of "authentic" NYC Latinos doing their deed.

I've got more links dealing with the whole amateur male thang, if you are interested.

Dan Schott

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N A M A C

National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture

Ninth Street Media Arts Building

346 Ninth Street

San Francisco, CA. 94103

415-431-1391 phone

415-431-1392 fax

mailto:namac@namac.org

http://www.namac.org

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Date: Tue, 30 Nov 1999 18:36:51 EST

Reply-To: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>

Sender: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>

From: Kevin John <LiLiPUT1@AOL.COM>

Subject: Re: course suggestions

To: FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM

Status: RO

In a message dated 11/30/99 11:43:23 AM, vsoe@SIRIUS.COM writes:

<< Bill Jones in LA put out an amazing video last year called something like The Fall of Communism As Seen Through Gay Porn (not sure of the exact title). It's got a whole section that's taken from actual screen tests of young men for Eastern European porn. I don't know how he came across the footage but it's pretty remarkable. >>

Bel Ami is an extremely popular video company that releases a lot of Eastern European gay porn. They're so popular, in fact, that they have a tape of screen tests available called 101 Men (I believe). I've seen neither the Jones tape nor the Bel Ami one but maybe that's where he got the screen tests from.

Kevin John

Date: Wed, 1 Dec 1999 10:32:44 -0000

Reply-To: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>

Sender: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>

From: John Carr <jcarr@NFTS-SCU.ORG.UK>

Subject: Re: QUEER PORN & ART HOUSE FUSION

To: FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM

The works of the film maker Bruce La Bruce are more than worth a quick review.

His work is very much in the tradition of Kuchard, John Walters, Paul Morrissey and Anger (if you this thread can be called a tradition).

Some of his works are "No Skin of My Arse", "Super 8 II" (with guest appearance from Richard Kern) , "Hustler White" and most recently "Skin Flick".

They are films which explore the porn imagery and stereotypical sexual fantasies of the Gay community.

"Skin Flick" covered the politically dangerous ground of the sexual fantasies that Gay men have for skin heads.

I saw him speaking about this film at the National Film Theatre (UK) and the issues about right wing skin heads certainly made some of the audience uncomfortable.

I would be interest to hear the views of anyone else who has seen this film. I am still not quite convinced!

John Carr

-----Original Message-----

From: Vanalyne Green [SMTP:vgreen@ARTIC.EDU]

Sent: Wednesday, December 01, 1999 5:41 AM

To: FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM

Subject: Re: course suggestions/screen tests

snip from Dan Schott:

>There's a huge subgenre of screen-test amateur videos that feature military

Date: Wed, 1 Dec 1999 04:06:00 EST

Reply-To: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>

Sender: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>

From: Kevin John <LiLiPUT1@AOL.COM>

Subject: Re: course suggestions/screen tests

To: FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM

In a message dated 11/30/99 11:36:03 PM, vgreen@ARTIC.EDU writes:

<< I haven't seen similar examples in gay porn, setting aside the likes of the fabulous George Kuchar....any suggestions? >>

Davey and the Cruisers is a hilarious (and extremely confused) Grease

send-up. Don't know the year (late 80's/early 90's) but Chi-Chi LaRue directed.

Some recent ones include:

Time Cops (Centuar Films, '98, dir. Chip Daniels) is a Western and involves time travel.

An American in Prague ('97 Bel Ami, dir. George Duroy) has tons of dialogue (sort of a romance) and a scene where one boy dances for another holding a video camera. Remarably light and even charming for a porno.

Invaders From Uranus ('97 Thor Production, dir. Thor Stephens) - Sci-fi...have't seen it, though.

Sex Invaders ('97 Thor Production, dir. Thor Stephens) - Similar to the above.

There are pounds more but I don't remember any at the moment. Hope that helps.

Kevin John

Date: Wed, 1 Dec 1999 11:46:23 -0500  
Reply-To: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>  
Sender: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>  
From: Corey Creekmur <corey-creekmur@UIOWA.EDU>  
Subject: Re: QUEER PORN & ART HOUSE FUSION  
To: FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM

I've followed this thread with interest but may have missed a mention of the amazing films of Curt McDowell -- if his work hasn't been mentioned, he should certainly be considered. I recall a memorable screening of his NUDES: A SKETCHBOOK at the University of Chicago: a rowdy mostly male audience laughed and cheered as Mark Ellinger masturbated while looking at PLAYBOY, but then was stunned into silence when McDowell entered the scene to grope him: at that moment, I felt, a lot of people learned what "queer" really meant. McDowell seems sadly underappreciated in discussions of the new queer cinema, but there's a pretty good discussion of his work in David Ehrenstein's FILM: THE FRONT LINE 1984. Does anyone else know of good work on the late, lamented McDowell? Corey

>The works of the film maker Bruce La Bruce are more than worth a quick  
>review.  
>His work is very much in the tradition of Kuchard, John Walters, Paul

>Morrisey and Anger (if you this thread can be called a tradition).  
>Some of his works are "No Skin of My Arse", "Super 8 []" (with guest  
>appearance from Richard Kern) , "Hustler White" and most recently "Skin  
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>They are films which explore the porn imagery and stereotypical sexual  
>fantasies of the Gay community.  
>"Skin Flick" covered the politically dangerous ground of the sexual  
>fantasies that Gay men have for skin heads.  
>I saw him speaking about this film at the National Film Theatre (UK) and  
>the issues about right wing skin heads certainly made some of the  
>audience uncomfortable.  
>I would be interest to hear the views of anyone else who has seen this  
>film. I am still not quite convinced!

>

>John Carr

>

.X-Sender: creekmur@blue.weeg.uiowa.edu

Mime-Version: 1.0

Date: Wed, 1 Dec 1999 12:51:50 -0500

Reply-To: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>

Sender: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>

From: Corey Creekmur <corey-creekmur@UIOWA.EDU>

Subject: Re: QUEER PORN & ART HOUSE FUSION

To: FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM

Actually, Chuck, I did know of these, but had forgotten them: to anyone  
who's interested, I can highly recommend both! No shame need attend this  
self-promotion. Corey

> Does anyone else know of good work

>>on the late, lamented McDowell? Corey

>

>shameless self-promotion of my articles, on Kuchar and McDowell:

>

>"Taking Out the Trash: Camp and the Politics of Irony," The Politics and

>Poetics of Camp, ed. Moe Meyer (NY and London: Routledge, 1994) 182-201.

>

>"THE DEVIL'S CLEAVAGE," Film Quarterly, 30:1 (Fall 1976), pp. 62-64.

>

>

>

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vgreen@pop.artic.edu

Mime-Version: 1.0

Date: Wed, 1 Dec 1999 16:49:12 -0500

Reply-To: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>

Sender: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>



From: Vanalyne Green <vgreen@ARTIC.EDU>  
Subject: Re: course suggestions/screen tests  
To: FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM  
Status: RO

David Conner wrote (snipping here):

>  
>With the gay screen tests, the tacit, even  
>obliging cooperation of the "straight" subject suddenly turns the volume of  
>the erotic charge way up; even when he resists, the sadistic elements of the  
>test - as it becomes ordeal - undeniably produce a different (if more  
>sinister) surplus of pleasure as well.

>  
What's interesting to me is what I was told as the origin of the screen test genre in gay porn, the screen test of--damn, I'm forgetting his name--the guy who did about six gay porn videos/films and then quit after being traumatized in a gang-rape scene--that in \*his\* screen test it seems as if what you're seeing is someone using the screen test to permit him to enjoy being gay. Particularly the moment when the director realizes the guy has secretly inserted a butt plug during the screen test....It's as if he's using the moment of the screen test to learn how to be gay, to experiment with the accoutrements of gay sex.

Or am I getting it totally wrong? Anyway, unlike the Jones-esque genre, the screen test I'm talking about inducts the viewer into a supportive relationship with the "actor." Green light. Permission given.

What do you think?

Also the definition of porn is so clunky, isn't it?

Anyway, thanks much--Vanalyne

---

Vanalyne Green

Date: Fri, 3 Dec 1999 16:14:56 -0500

Reply-To: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>

Sender: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>

From: Stephen Kent Jusick <skj@ECHONYC.COM>

Subject: Re: QUEER PORN & ART HOUSE FUSION

To: FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM

Status: RO

Vanlyne

Check out the work of Wash West aka Wash Westmoreland.  
Squishy Does Porno exists in 2 versions, a 23 min. version and 33 min.  
After Wash made this short he went on to make legit gay porn, including the  
acclaime NAKED HIGHWAY, which is a fugitive road movie, among other things.

DR. JERKOFF AND MR. HARD is an update of the famous transformation story,  
and employs more humor than Naked Hwy, which is more autentically dramatic.  
In fact, Naked Hwy was just released in a new softcore version. I haven't  
seen it, but the fact that the studio recut it suggests that they recognize  
the merits of its artistry.

Older 1970s gay porn is also interesting.... LEFT HANDED by Jack Deveau is  
an interesting story of a bisexual man who lives upstate and has his gay  
encounters in NYC. There's a sex scene with him and his wife, and then  
when he's having sex with his male lover shots of his forlorn Mrs. are  
intercut with the gay sex.

Wakefield Poole's BIJOU has a funk scene where a guy enters a porn theater  
and sees all these images. Thge screen is divided into 4 or 5 sections  
(optical printing) and it's really great, beautiful. I just showed that  
segment (on Regular 8) the other night at the Pure Protein film series at  
I.C. Guys here in the East Village.

there's also a not very good 1980s/1990s (?) tape that is a murdermystery,  
with segments presented in B&W. It's all video and not really very good,  
but I can look up the title if you want.

I'm sure there's plenty more. I've been looking at a lot of 70s gay porn,  
and am especially pleased when I find experimental techniques or tropes  
(PINK NARCISSUS) or narrative or composition that suggests an awareness of  
other arts, or a self-consciousness about making something important or  
lasting. LA PLAYS ITSELF and SEX GARAGE are similarly intersting.  
Unconventional use of sound in these films is another indicator of am  
aesthetic different from most porn.

In terms of Bruce La Bruce, while his features are fairly well discussed, I  
suggest looking at the shorts of GB Jones, who collaborate with BLAB in the  
early days, before thay had a falling out. GB's titles include THE YO YO  
GANG, and THE TROUBLEMAKERS, both shot on Super8, great color and music.  
And funny. In THE TROUBLEMAKERS there's a sequence with Jo the Ho that has  
a feeling of a screen test, so that may be of interest.

If I can be of further help, please let me know.

SKJ

>Thanks much; I'd love to have the other links you referred to. Something  
>I've been wondering about: I've seen some straight porn that blends  
>genres--film noir and porn, e.g., in ways that get mildly funny (the private  
>dick jokes, etc.); I haven't seen similar examples in gay porn, setting  
>aside the likes of the fabulous George Kuchar.....any suggestions?  
>

>Vanalyne

ameWorks, contact Pip Chodorov at <PipChod@aol.com>.MIME-Version: 1.0

Date: Sat, 4 Dec 1999 14:04:05 EST

Reply-To: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>

Sender: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>

From: ConnerSF@AOL.COM

Subject: Re: course suggestions/screen tests

To: FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM

In a message dated 12/3/99 7:04:31 AM, Vanalyne Green wrote:

<<that in \*his\* screen test it seems

as if what you're seeing is someone using the screen test to permit him to  
enjoy being gay. Particularly the moment when the director realizes the  
guy has secretly inserted a butt plug during the screen test....It's as if  
he's using the moment of the screen test to learn how to be gay, to  
experiment with the accoutrements of gay sex.

Or am I getting it totally wrong? Anyway, unlike the Jones-esque genre,  
the screen test I'm talking about inducts the viewer into a supportive  
relationship with the "actor." Green light. Permission given.

What do you think?

Also the definition of porn is so clunky, isn't it?>>

Yes, I think it is, but also "clunky" is the way we tend to use a too  
limiting notion of "being gay" in thinking about porn. Somebody, I forget  
who, made the very interesting observation that straight porn is the only  
place where "straight" men can look at other's men's penises in an INTENSELY  
eroticized way and not feel panicked about it. I've never quite understood  
how straight porn gets away with this...maybe someone else on the list would  
be better qualified to answer that question.

Gay porn is chock full of men who define themselves primarily as "straight" -  
which basically just means that they won't get fucked - but they also seem to  
be getting a fare share of pleasure out of walking that very fine  
definitional line. There's a new series at a local video store which is

primarily intended for gay audiences (I think), but it deals entirely with possibilities of "straight" seduction in the MOST explicit, most "realistic" way: straight women pick up straight guys at bars, take them to peep show booths, put them in a booth with a glory hole, and then get their gay "accomplice" to give the guy a blow job from the adjoining cubicle. All of the erotic appeal of this series doesn't come from the acts being represented, but rather from very the idea that a "straight" guy is getting sucked off by a "gay" guy. My point is just this: porn provides the scenarios and the techniques within and through which "sexual identity" itself becomes subject to eroticization. Eroticized, that is, only to the degree that those "straight" definitions of homo/hetero can be "fucked with."

David Conner  
History of Consciousness  
UC Santa Cruz

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Date: Sat, 4 Dec 1999 14:55:50 EST  
Reply-To: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>  
Sender: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>  
From: Kevin John <LiLiPUT1@AOL.COM>  
Subject: Re: course suggestions/screen tests  
To: FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM

In a message dated 12/4/99 1:04:16 PM, ConnerSF@AOL.COM writes:

<< Somebody, I forget who, made the very interesting observation that straight porn is the only place where "straight" men can look at other's men's penises in an INTENSELY eroticized way and not feel panicked about it. I've never quite understood how straight porn gets away with this...maybe someone else on the list would be better qualified to answer that question. >>

The male actors in straight porno are chosen, in general, for how well they ease the tensions of the straight male watching it. Usually, this is manifested in looks; the fatter and uglier the guy, the better off the spectator feels about himself ("If HE could fuck all these chicks looking like that, I could too."). The quintessential example of this is Ron Jeremy (or Mr. Icky as my friends term him) who's become something of a notorious celebrity (making camoes in music videos and mainstream films; recording a rap single) precisely for how utterly he epitomizes this aspect. For this reason, men (the actual actors themselves) are not placed at a high premium in straight porn; they're paid less and rarely pampered on the set (please - no Linda Lovelace-esque testimonies to the contrary; my comments merely surround the truth and are not meant to account for all experiences). The

straight boys in gay porn will back this up and probably tell you that's why they came over to the dark side. They tell us lots of things, those straight boys...

David, I loved your comment about fucking with sexual identity in gay porn. I think an important component of the str8 boy in gay porn discourse is the increased media savvy of gay porn magazines. There are several publications which are devoted solely to the gay porn film industry. Some go heavily into behind the scenes details which include information on the proclaimed sexual orientation of the actors. The enormously informative (and intensely palm-friendly) annual Adam Gay Video Directory, for instance, has a long list of star bios/photos in the beginning which identifies as many str8 boys as it can. These popular publications form a media savvy spectator who can choose those gay pornos with straight stars specifically in order to view that eroticization of sexual identity that you spoke of. That's, of course, without recourse to such titles as Don't Kiss Me - I'm Straight and God, Was I Drunk!

Kevin John

X-Priority: 3

Date: Sat, 4 Dec 1999 16:35:53 -0500

Reply-To: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>

Sender: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>

From: Robert Arnold <bob\_kate@BELLSOUTH.NET>

Subject: Re: course suggestions/screen tests

To: FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM

It may have been the late Dennis Giles, who used to teach at Cleveland State U. In a series of articles he made a rather convincing case that the visual dynamics of straight porn permit an unconscious identification between male spectator and female character, suggesting that the eroticism of straight porn is in fact homoerotic.

Bob Arnold

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>From: Kevin John <LiLiPUT1@AOL.COM>

>To: FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM

>Subject: Re: course suggestions/screen tests

>Date: Sat, Dec 4, 1999, 2:55 PM

>

> In a message dated 12/4/99 1:04:16 PM, ConnerSF@AOL.COM writes:

>

> << Somebody, I forget who, made the very interesting observation that

> straight porn is the only place where "straight" men can look at other's  
> men's penises in an INTENSELY eroticized way and not feel panicked about it.  
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>

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> celebrity (making cameos in music videos and mainstream films; recording a  
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> no Linda Lovelace-esque testimonies to the contrary; my comments merely  
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>

> David, I loved your comment about fucking with sexual identity in gay porn. I  
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> orientation of the actors. The enormously informative (and intensely  
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> those gay pornos with straight stars specifically in order to view that  
> eroticization of sexual identity that you spoke of. That's, of course,  
> without recourse to such titles as Don't Kiss Me - I'm Straight and God, Was  
> I Drunk!

>

> Kevin John

X-Priority: 3

Date: Sun, 5 Dec 1999 14:58:52 -0600

Reply-To: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>

Sender: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>

From: Vanalyne Green <vgreen@ARTIC.EDU>

Subject: Re: het porn

To: FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM

In a message dated 12/6/99, Chuck Kleinhans responded to the idea "that

male actors in het porn are predominantly fat and ugly" by saying that this "defies any reasonable survey. Arguably, some are...but most are not. ARE they attractive?"

(See past my response for the thread)

Right; Ron Jeremy is a mesomorph, but I think he's the exception. There's plenty of buffed bodies and six packs, etc., in most of the straight porn I've seen, along with dicks that span the length of the Brooklyn Bridge. But the question of how "straight" men look at other men's bodies and dicks without feeling threatened \*is\* interesting. And Chuck does, to my knowledge, pay attention to some part of that answer--the element of "what's-being-done" to the actress, as in "I (male viewer) could do/am doing/will be doing that, too."

Still, there are a lot of wide shots in the straight porn I've seen in which the full body of the handsome romance-novel hunk is quite visible. But could you not ask the same question in gay porn? What mental gymnastics do "gay" guys go through to look at bionic superstud w/o feeling a tad bit inadequate? But maybe the rise in men's cosmetic surgery statistics, etc., indicates that the mental gymnastics ain't working. Which is why I love '70s porn so much--the bodies aren't so rationalized.

Vanalyne, also in Chicago.

12/4/99 1:04:16 PM, ConnerSF@AOL.COM writes:

>>

>><< Somebody, I forget who, made the very interesting observation that  
>>straight porn is the only place where "straight" men can look at other's  
>>men's penises in an INTENSELY eroticized way and not feel panicked about it.  
>>I've never quite understood  
>>how straight porn gets away with this...maybe someone else on the list would  
>>be better qualified to answer that question. >>

>>

>Kevin John adds

>>The male actors in straight porno are chosen, in general, for how well they  
>>ease the tensions of the straight male watching it. Usually, this is  
>>manifested in looks; the fatter and uglier the guy, the better off the  
>>spectator feels about himself ("If HE could fuck all these chicks looking  
>>like that, I could too."). The quintessential example of this is Ron Jeremy  
>>(or Mr. Icky as my friends term him) who's become something of a notorious

>>celebrity

>

>Well, excuse me, but this does seem like a lot of gay gay stereotyping of  
>hets.

>

>Consider:

>

>1. Different people look at straight porn in different ways. Where one  
>person is looking erotically at the penis, or at the male performer,  
>another may be looking at the female partner or some part of her. Screen  
>time, POV, and other factors privilege looking at women.

>2. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

>3. Ron Jeremy is certainly an exception in terms of physical appearance, on  
>screen personality, etc. Plus he's a lot older than when he started 20  
>plus years ago (and more obnoxious,... and Jewish?). But when he was still  
>young and flexible, he was recorded on film fellating himself--is that a  
>straight or gay act? Or both, or other?

see 2 above.

>

>Chuck Kleinhans, Chicago

Date: Sun, 5 Dec 1999 17:52:38 EST

Reply-To: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>

Sender: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>

From: Kevin John <LiLiPUT1@AOL.COM>

Subject: Re: het porn

To: FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM

My comments on straight porn formulate a theory and are certainly not gospel and I said that. However, they're informed by my job at a video store which could not survive without their porn section (you'd be surprised how many folks want not Black Cheerleader Search 24 nor Black Cheerleader Search 26 but Black Cheerleader Search 25). So the idea that male actors in het porn are predominantly fat and ugly does not defy any reasonable survey - I'm mired in it every day. You're right to say that Ron Jeremy is an exception in terms of personality (he appeared in a bisexual porno although he didn't have sex with men) but definitely not so in looks.

But perhaps I should have refined this some. Yes, beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Yes, there are some hunky guys in straight porn. However, comparatively speaking, the male actors in straight porn are overwhelmingly fatter, are less buff, have less six packs, etc. than those in gay porn. Again, beauty is in the eye of the beholder - buff men with six packs turn a lot of folks off. But who's gunna get on the runway first?

So I formulated my theory from this information. My theory was that straight



porn goes a long way towards easing the anxieties of the straight male viewer and one of the ways it does this is by casting actors with more reassuring bodies. No, not every straight male viewer of straight porn is filled with anxiety. Yes, some of the straight male viewers of straight porn are hunks themselves. But I ask as many questions of our customers as I can get away with and I know enough about them to know that my theory isn't completely useless.

But what the cultural studies side of me finds curiously absent from your post, Chuck, is a testimonial. I'm assuming you're straight. So let's hear some of your personal reactions to specific pornos.

Vanalyne, you wrote "But the question of how "straight" men look at other men's bodies and dicks without feeling threatened \*is\* interesting. And Chuck does, to my knowledge, pay attention to some part of that answer--the element of "what's-being-done" to the actress, as in "I (male viewer) could do/am doing/will be doing that, too."

I thought I had addressed that in my post (and this one). But you brought up an excellent point about asking similar questions of gay porn. I've thought about that a lot but I've yet to formulate any theory that wouldn't incur even more posts about egregious stereotyping. I'm sure there are feelings of inadequacy on the part of the gay male viewer. No doubt that has something to do with the gym craze in gay culture. But I do know that many viewers feel cheated if the actors in gay porn aren't in excellent physical shape (I've actually seen a 12-pack) or else young in an extremely fetishized way. Why is this? Does this have something to do with the straight jock bullies who teased us or beat us up in high school? Is this why straight-identified actors in gay porn are so acceptable? Is this a form of idealization that we have a particular capacity to respond to? Is it stylization?

Kevin John

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sicinski@uclink4.Berkeley.edu

Mime-Version: 1.0

Date: Sun, 5 Dec 1999 15:54:00 -0800

Reply-To: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>

Sender: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>

From: "Michael J. Sicinski" <sicinski@UCLINK4.BERKELEY.EDU>

Subject: Re: het porn

To: FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM

David Conner wrote:

>Somebody, I forget  
>who, made the very interesting observation that straight porn is the only  
>place where "straight" men can look at other's men's penises in an INTENSELY  
>eroticized way and not feel panicked about it. I've never quite understood  
>how straight porn gets away with this..

Somebody has probably already pointed this out, but in case they haven't, this insight comes from Scott MacDonald, in his essay "Confessions of a Feminist Port Watcher." I can't find my copy right now for the exact reference, but it was published in FILM QUARTERLY, and reprinted in the recent F.Q. anthology. It is *\*definitely\** worth a look.

Michael Sicinski  
San Leandro CA

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Date: Tue, 7 Dec 1999 13:54:24 +0100  
Reply-To: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>  
Sender: Experimental Film Discussion List <FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM>  
From: Stéphane du Mesnildot <winslow@CLUB-INTERNET.FR>  
Subject: Body in Porn  
To: FRAMEWORKS@LISTSERV.AOL.COM  
X-MIME-Autoconverted: from 8bit to quoted-printable by relay.acns.nwu.edu id GAA21119  
X-MIME-Autoconverted: from quoted-printable to 8bit by merle.acns.nwu.edu id GAA21965

Hi,  
the discussion about Ron Jeremy is really interesting. Ron Jeremy is for me the typical exemple of the bodies who appeared in the american movies in the seventies. In the seventies, in a way oppened by cassavetes and Morrissey, the bodies came from the streest and do'nt hide their origins (like De Niro and Pacino as representation of the latin communaity). In the same way, Marylin Chambers is a typical flower-child body, there is no comparison with the silicon-babes of the actual porn. The early porn is one aspect of this direct contact beetween actors and spectators that we can find in the independants movies of the Seventies. But Jeremy is also a comedy actor, and now a veteran uses as a fetish of the glory seventies. The most famous actor of the seventies is in fact John Holmes. Maybe John Homes is a kind of doppleganger of Burt Reynolds the ultimate Macho Man of this time (Reynolds is an icon in both gay and straight porn, and there's no surprise to find him in Boogie Nights). I think that the body-building in the eighties has deeply transformed the representation of the bodies and of the sexual act as a performance. The turn of the 35 mm to Video transforms the porn industry in mass production. It's a symptom that Savanna (the tragic porn starlet) was

the mate of charlie Sheen, the incarnation of the yuppie of the Reagan years in Oliver Stone's Wall Street. We can't say in the nineties that the actor in porn is obligatory ugly and fat. Maybe because the expansion of the video turns the market from the raincoat brigade to straight couple. I don't know if it's the same in USA but in Europe the most famous actor of all times is Rocco Siffredi, a typical latin lover adored by women (the modern Rudolph Valentino is a porn actor!). But I think the real transformation of the bodies at the end of the nineties is the loss of identity. We are in the era of the ADN, of the clonage, etc., and the porn reflects that. With the silicon boom, the sex is more virtual than ever. The favourite routine in the nineties porn is the gang bang : no more individuality, no faces, just a confusion of the bodies. With some figures including a high number of men and only one girl we can say that it's close to gay porn, but I think it is the expression of the woman orgasm as a pure idea circulating through the bodies as an electric wave.

Stéphane

---

Pip Chodorov at <PipChod@aol.com>.

Kevin John theorizes:

straight

>porn goes a long way towards easing the anxieties of the straight male viewer  
>and one of the ways it does this is by casting actors with more reassuring  
>bodies.

Maybe presumed "anxieties" about ones own body aren't as significant for most straight men as they are for most gay men? Hey, just a theory...but since, by and large, straight men have a "male privilege" of economic/social/political power compared to their (real or prospective) partners, maybe they don't have to sweat the body stuff as much...whereas straight women, having their bodies as a major vehicle for exchange, do. You know the old adage: the most miserable (ugly, quarrelsome, unpleasant, abusive, etc. etc.) straight guy can always find a woman to love and/or take care of him. (Add rule of thumb here on fag hags.)

The above discussion cries out for a further discussion that includes race in representation and spectatorship. Are (straight/gay) white guys anxious about black guys in het porn? What is the anxiety that seems to preclude Asian guys as stud performers in het porn?

I'd offer the observation that since straight porn (and gay porn too?) today is so amazingly segmented by differences in activity/perversion/object of desire/narration, etc. (The Black Cheerleader no. 25 question), one might more logically conclude that those items rather than anxieties about male bodies constitute the erotic charge (and therefore the rental desire).

Further elaboration: Kevin's theory apparently can't account for female masturbation videos and the girl/girl subgenre.

Since Kevin seems to be of the cultural studies camp that values personal ethnographic research:

I was showing some het porn to a gay film scholar when he remarked what a nice ass and butt hole the guy had. It never crossed my mind--I had viewed the sequence/shot numerous times before assuming the interest was in the female body in the frame. Conclusion? People are highly selective in what they see in what they are viewing. (Footnote here to all the film theory work on subject positioning; Freud's "A Child Is Being Beaten," yadda yadda.)

Here's an interesting case study: there's now a series, American Bukkake, which seems a further extension of the gangbang subgenre. In it, a fairly large group of guys ejaculate one by one or in pairs, on a woman who starts out with a solo masturbation with dildo. So, after the initial female performance, all the screen time consists of penises ejaculating, although the woman remains in the center of the frame. So is this gay (circle jerk subgenre; maximum attention to penises) or straight (cum shot on female face/body)? Or gay/straight male bonding over the (apparent) degradation of a woman?...hmm, where have I heard of that before?

Omigod, have I just been outed as (nominally) straight? and a film theorist to boot?

Chuck Kleinhans  
Chicago